# Assassination Theories

By WALTER GOODMAN

A quarter of a century after the assassination of John F. Kennedy, conspiracy theories are still alive and kicking, as evidenced by two new programs. At 9 o'clock tonight on Channel 31, there's "Kwitny Report Special: The Kennedy Assassination," and arriving at 8 o'clock tomorrow on Channel 9 is "American Exposé: Who Murdered J.F.K.?," with Jack Anderson as host. Since "American Exposé" is being broadcast live, I was not able to review it, but its allegations of underworld participation in the assassination are similar to those of tonight's offering.

Recent books by two current conspiraticians are the basis of the Channel 31 program. Along with a few other sources, they have persuaded the host, Jonathan Kwitny, that President Kennedy was the victim of a Mafia conspiracy. Not all viewers are likely to be equally persuaded, but the facts, inferences and surmises offered here make for a provocative hour for anybody who still cares.

David Scheim, author of "Contract on America," and John H. Davis, author of "Mafia Kingfish," present arguments that both the President's killer, Lee Harvey Oswald, and Oswald's killer, Jack Ruby, had connections to the crime family of Carlos Marcello, who, the authors contend, conspired with Jimmy Hoffa, then head of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and a major target of the Justice Department, then directed by the President's brother Robert F. Kennedy, to do the deed. They maintain further that details of those connections were withheld from the Warren Commission by the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. (Mr. Scheim has contributed a foreword to Mr. Davis's book — which ought not be taken as evidence of a conspiracy.)

The Warren Commission's conclusion that Oswald was, in the critics' phrase, a "lone nut" is written off as "convenient" for Federal officials who were seeking to protect their own secrets. Ruby's testimony that he just happened to be on hand in time to shoot Oswald is called "preposterous."

No smoking gun is presented here, no direct evidence of Oswald's being assigned to kill the President or of Ruby's being assigned to kill Oswald. But Mr. Kwitny, until lately a reporter for The Wall Street Journal, makes much of an astounding secret memo from J. Edgar Hoover stating that a man who claimed to be Lee Harvey Oswald at the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City before the assassination was not in fact the real Oswald. "Two Oswalds," declares Mr. Kwitny, "mean one thing" — a conspiracy.

In a postscript to the documentary, rebuttals are offered by Senator Arlen Specter and David Bellin, who served as counsels to the Warren Commission. Mr. Bellin, who has written his own book on the subject, "Full Disclosure," says that Mr. Kwitny has "fallen hook, line and sinker for books of fiction." He points out that Ruby passed a lie detector test in which he denied being part of any conspiracy. Senator Specter calls the program's content "snatches of a little fact here and there that add up to nothing," but he seems a little vague about those little facts.

The program, produced by Tom Naughton, does not live up to the press release claim of being "a conclusive report on the plot to kill J.F.K." — but, then, for 25 years, theories about the assassination have tended to claim more than they could substantiate. Whatever viewers take from this effort, they can be pretty sure that the case will continue to produce inconclusive exposés for at least another quarter-century.

## Two reports assert evidence of a plot behind John F. Kennedy's death